

Do Your Feet Stink?

(Everything in Baseball Starts With the Feet!)

by Coach JP at <http://www.baseballtips.com/>

Good feet will place the athlete in position to succeed...for the action at hand.

When I see a throw heading over a 1st baseman's head from his 3rd baseman, I immediately look down at the feet of the thrower, and chances are I will find the reason for the errant throw. The same goes for pitchers, outfielders, absolutely for catchers and also with hitters too.

Most every sport is played in what is known as "The Athletic Position." That position most closely resembles the body position of a football defensive back at the line of scrimmage or that of a basketball player who is guarding an opponent...and it all starts with the feet. Poor positioning and weight distribution equals poor balance. Poor balance does not allow the body to use all of its strength and quickness...and this is true for any age or skill level!

How to get into the athletic position...a foolproof drill!

(great for hitters and fielders)

Have your player(s) stand outside the batter's box with bat on back shoulder.

Coach's command is "jump into the batter's box."

However they land is most likely a close-to-perfect position...a very strong athletic position.

Here's my take on the subject

I teach hitting from the ground up.

I learned this many years ago from Denny and Blake Doyle of The Doyle Baseball School, one of the first premier teaching programs in the country. They felt so strongly about footwork that they even had a training device showing you how wide your stance needed to be... and that was 15 years ago!

The features of the athletic position

- Feet should be 1 ½ to 2 times shoulder width.
This will give you great balance plus the ability to quickly go to your left or right... a great help in the field and on the base paths!
- Weight should be distributed equally... on the balls of each foot.
This also keeps you quick in all directions and allows you to transfer your weight fastest.
- Knees are slightly flexed and actually "inside of the ankles" (look down... you'll see if you are correct or not.)
- The body segments from waist to head are stacked upon each other with a tall backside (not jack-knifed or leaning in any odd direction.) In general, it will just look normal when you observe your hitter(s).

Note: There is no one-size-fits-all and styles are exactly that... styles.

Players don't need to look identical but if you read and understand the features of the athletic position, you will certainly help the player who is without any sound mechanical approach and is without direction. As for your successful players...sometimes they just need to be left alone until they become overmatched by the better pitchers in your league.

In summary...

Whether you are pitching, hitting, running the bases or playing the field... teach and focus on the feet. It is absolutely critical and will allow players with poor footwork to change dramatically and become much improved.

Know that players may need continual reminders when being taught the benefits of improved footwork. The great news is that this is one of those traits that when taught seems to make immediate sense to players and rapid improvement can be expected!

The keyword is balance and the quickness and agility that comes from good footwork!

Please don't be intimidated or feel you cannot make a difference. Just dig in and start with re-reading about the features of the athletic position. Teach it and then go directly to the "jump in the box drill" and watch your own light go on!

BTW: For infielders who want even more on great fielding mechanics including drills, I highly recommend our impressive DVD called [Ultimate Infield](#) by Florida Marlins infield coach Perry Hill.

The whole truth as I have told it...

Know what you call infielders with slow feet and hands? Outfielders!

<http://www.baseballtips.com/>